

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, January 31, 2017

Richardson & Robbins Building Auditorium

89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware

Phone 302-739-9912, FAX 302-739-6157

ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Edward A. Montague, Chair
2. Garrett Grier, Jr., Vice Chair (Absent)
3. Raymond F. Burris
4. Neal Dukes
5. Robert C. Nichols (Absent)
6. Craig A. Karsnitz
7. Joe C. Johnson
8. Steven M. Kendus
9. Dale R. Scuse

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

1. Director David E. Saveikis
2. Chief Drew Aydelotte
3. Rob Hossler
4. Anthony Gonzon
5. Justyn Foth
6. Joe Rogerson
7. Emily Boyd
8. Holly Niederriter
9. Bill Jones
10. Karen Kennedy

PUBLIC

6 Visitors

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Montague at 7:00 PM.

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the November 29, 2016 meeting minutes as written.

Agenda Item 2. Proposed Little Creek Wildlife Observation Tower and Boardwalk Renovation (Anthony Gonzon).

Anthony Gonzon, Delaware Bayshore Initiative Coordinator, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the current project to upgrade the Little Creek Boardwalk and Observation Tower located in the Little Creek Wildlife Area. The tower's chain-link fencing and rotten wooden decking boards were replaced a couple years ago. A recent assessment found that the tower was structurally secure and safe, but would not meet current code requirements and was not compliant with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). The Division has contracted with an engineering firm to develop designs to upgrade the tower and associated access facilities to improve access and wildlife viewing opportunities. These new wildlife viewing structures will be funded with a federal highway scenic byway grant and bond bill funds appropriated to the Bayshore Initiative, with maintenance at these structures funded through revenues generated by the new Conservation Access Pass. The Division has held two stakeholder meetings, one included local residents and members of the wildlife viewing community and a second with disabled users to address the ADA guidelines and to

make improvements on past designs. Mr. Gonzon presented draft boardwalk and platform designs under consideration and stated that comments on these designs are welcomed and encouraged from Council and the public.

A motion was made by Councilman Scuse and seconded by Councilman Burris to congratulate the Division on their presentation and support the project. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Saveikis announced that the Division is naming this wildlife trail and observation tower after DNREC's outgoing Secretary David S. Small in honor of his support of the Division and his love for the area. Director Saveikis showed the dedication sign to Council members and members of the audience.

Agenda Item 3. Delaware Bat Research, Monitoring and Conservation (Holly Niederriter).

Holly Niederriter, wildlife biologist, gave a PowerPoint presentation on Bat Research, Monitoring and Conservation in Delaware. Bats are ecologically and economically important because they eat night-flying insects such as mosquitoes, moths and beetles, saving farmers billions of dollars nationally every year. Unfortunately since 2006, millions of bats have died from White-Nose Syndrome (WNS), an infection spread by the fungus *Pseudogynoaescus destructans*. In Delaware, WNS was first detected at Fort Delaware in 2010 and confirmed in infected bats in 2012. There are several ongoing bat projects to help control and monitor WNS in Delaware, including annual fall and winter hibernating bat surveys at Fort Delaware along with a disinfection study and

education program. Other bat projects include emergence counts where volunteers count bats emerging from their maternity colonies at dusk, an acoustic survey identifying bats by calls and providing a free bat box for planned bat building exclusions. Future plans are to continue with most of the projects, write a conservation and management plan and focus on locating rare bat species through acoustics and follow-up forest catches.

Agenda Item 4. Delaware Phragmites Control Program (Bill Jones).

Bill Jones, fish and wildlife regional manager for Kent County, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the phragmites control program in Delaware. *Phragmites australis* is a very adaptable, aggressive plant in the grass family typically found in wet marshy areas. Phragmites becomes established in marshes either by seedlings that germinate in bare areas with appropriate soil conditions, underground rhizome extension or fragments that break off plants. Phragmites control requires the destruction of the underground stem and root system. In the past, the Division tried more traditional methods such as mowing and burning, but phragmites would soon re-sprout since the underground root system was not affected. In the 1980s the Division began experimenting with aquatic herbicides containing the active ingredient Glyphosate, which translocates to the underground root system and prevents the plant from re-sprouting. In 2016, the Division sprayed 5,955 acres for phragmites, of which 3,602 acres were on state wildlife areas and 2,353 acres on private land. Most of these private acres were enrolled in the Division's cost-sharing program that was initiated in 1986 for landowners with five or more acres of phragmites.

Agenda Item 5. Director Update (David E. Saveikis).

Director Saveikis stated that there was no legislation to report due to the transition period of a new administration.

Director Saveikis reported that the Division is continuing with the re-programming and testing of the eGov license system and remains on schedule to sell the new Conservation Access Pass by July 1, 2017. Director Saveikis distributed a draft, two-sided rack card to Council members that will be available in late spring as part of an extensive outreach effort to inform the public of the need for a Conservation Access Pass.

Director Saveikis announced that a total of 1,170 deer were harvested on the five specified deer hunting Sundays during the 2016/2017 hunting season in Delaware.

Director Saveikis announced that the Division's annual waterfowl and trout stamp contest will be held on Saturday, April 8 at Owens Station, and asked if a Council member would be willing to serve on the judging panel. Councilman Karsnitz stated that he would like to participate, but would have to check his schedule and report back to the Division.

Director Saveikis provided Council members with the winter edition of the Outdoor Delaware magazine featuring an article entitled "Listening to the Fish" written by fisheries biologists Johnny Moore and Ian Park describing use of telemetry technology to track fish species. Also included are our customary informative Econote series on wildlife areas featuring Old Furnace Wildlife Area by Rob Gano, Fishing by John Clark and the Delaware Sportsmen Against Hunger Program by William Jones.

A member of the audience requested an update on the potential tundra swan hunting season.

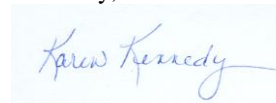
PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS WILL BEGIN AT 7:00 PM

AGENDA FOR THE 2/28/2017 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).
2. Liberalized Black Duck Bag Limit (Rob Hossler).
3. Tundra Swan Hunting Proposal (Justyn Foth).
4. Proposed Migratory Game Bird Seasons (Rob Hossler).
5. Bylaw Changes - Meeting Dates and Purposes (Council).
6. Director Update (David E. Saveikis).

There being no further business, a motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Sincerely,



Karen Kennedy
Recording Secretary